



5.2 Grievance Difference

Definition

Grievance/Difference: Where an action or decision is considered to be unfair or inappropriate, there is the right to raise a complaint and have it considered seriously - such a complaint is known as a grievance. The grievance/difference process is intended to encompass any educational, behavioural, or school environment issues that may arise.

Rationale

- In any organisation conflict of a personal or professional nature may arise.
- Lutheran Schools are Christ-centred and need to be mindful of the values of their community. If conflicts arise they need to be dealt with in a spirit of loving servant-hood. Conflicts should be dealt with in relation to the principles of a functioning Christian community. (See Matt. 18:15-16, Eph. 4:29, Eph. 4:32).
- For a Christian community to function well, all members must actively work together for the common good (Paul’s analogy of the church as a human body – 1Cor. 12:12-27). The functions and gifts of each member will vary but the desire to work for the good of the community is the same. The respect and status of an individual is not determined by their particular gifts, or by their position in the school. Responsibilities are to be carried out with love and forgiveness so that the community is built up. No one is exempt. (*Teachers in Lutheran Schools Policy*)
- The welfare of children in the school is paramount. Open criticism of any parties in a dispute does not support children’s education. To this end, fair and open communication through the use of the Difference Procedure ensures that the rights and responsibilities of all parties are respected and the restoration of relationships is achieved.

Aims

- Lutheran Schools should at all times seek to create harmony and to avoid destructive conflict. The Christian atmosphere of a school community should be such that all feel safe to express their point of view openly, honestly and in a spirit of love.
- To support the School initiative of striving for the restoration of relationships according to restorative practices.

Implementation

- All staff, school council members and volunteers of the School are to be trained in Lutheran Education Australia’s Valuing Safe Communities (VSC).
- The Valuing Safe Communities Framework is to be followed when dealing with grievances between two parties within the School community. (*5.1.A Complaint Resolution Options Procedures*).

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- It is recognized that individuals in the school community are at different stages in their faith journeys and that this could affect their readiness and/or willingness to engage in prayer throughout the procedural steps.
 - Grievances are to be kept confidential.
 - All participants are to resist the temptation to become ‘rescuers’ and fuel the issue through well-intentioned defense/anger/attack/gossip.
 - Any party to a dispute has the right to be accompanied by another person, in a support role, at any meetings convened to discuss resolution of that dispute.
 - Specific guidelines for handling initial complaints from parents concerning educational or behavioural issues, and complaints from the local community are outlined in ***(5.1.B Complaint Recommendations for School community members procedures)***
 - Accurate records of all disputes and proceedings should be maintained and current copies held by all parties involved. A proforma is attached Appendix A.
 - Although anonymous complaints will be heard they may only be treated as indicators of potential issues requiring attention.
 - It is the obligation of all parties to deal with a concern as promptly and amicably as possible. In some cases where external personnel or factors are involved, resolution may take longer.
 - The LCA Safe Place Policy applies to matters of sexual abuse and harassment.
 - Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s five-year review cycle.

<p><i>Date Approved: September 2017</i> <i>Origin: SCS</i> <i>Date for Review: 2020</i></p>

Appendix A

SUNSHINE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
"Live as children of the Light"



MEETING RECORD

Re:		DATE:		TIME:	
PARTICIPANTS:		1	2	3.	
4	5	6	7		
NOTES:			<u>STRATEGIES</u>		
			<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Treat the other person with respect.2. Listen until you experience the other side.3. State your view, needs and feelings – Describe conflict in clear, concrete terms. Address who, what, where, when and why. Describe behaviours, feelings, consequences and desired changes. Start with I.4. Explore alternative solutions – be non-judgemental.5. Agree a solution6. Evaluate over time.		
AGREED ACTIONS:					
•					
FOLLOW-UP:					
•					
SIGNED					